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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Catherine Ashton hosted Maritime Security event

Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, hosted a meeting on Tuesday in Brussels at the European External Action Service, with a number of African countries, to examine maritime threats to Africa and to discuss areas of future cooperation.

"The European Union is the main supporter of African efforts to develop capacity to manage security across the continent. Maritime security off the coast of Africa is a key issue of shared concern for both the EU and Africa and we share an interest in urgently countering this threat which undermines the social, economic and security fabric of the African nations affected," said Catherine Ashton.

On the margins of the meeting, the High Representative and the Foreign Minister of Tanzania signed an Agreement on the conditions of transfer of suspected pirates and associated seized property from the European Union led naval force to the United Republic of Tanzania.

The commitment of the EU to deter piracy off the coast of Somalia remains strong and has helped to deliver a significant drop in piracy attacks: 176 in 2011 compared to 7 in 2013. The EU's comprehensive approach, linking diplomacy, security and development, is the guiding principle for counter-piracy efforts on land and on the seas. The EU is currently the chair of the International Contact Group on piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Drawing on the lessons learned in the Horn of Africa, the EU also adopted on 17 March a strategy focusing on the Gulf of Guinea to support the efforts of the region and its coastal states to address the many challenges of maritime insecurity and organised crime.

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Participating at the meeting on Tuesday were Angola, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Mauritius, Nigeria, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo. The African Union was represented by Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security. The Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU was represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Dimitris Kourkoulas.

Opening images of the meeting and the images of the signing ceremony with Tanzania are available [here](#).

